



Adelaide Park Lands Preservation Association, Inc.

www.adelaide-parklands.asn.au
secretary@adelaide-parklands.asn.au

P.O. Box 7334
 Hutt Street, Adelaide SA 5000

Patron: Rev Dr Lynn Arnold AO

ABN 19 706 384 386

The South Australian Heritage Register: listing of Adelaide Park Lands and City Squares

- In this submission APPA points to evidence that the Adelaide Park Lands are a clearly defined region with outstanding cultural elements significant to South Australia's development and identity.
- In terms of the *Heritage Places Act 1993*, the Adelaide Park Lands are a *place*, an identifiable area of land in South Australia.
- It is APPA's submission that, for the purposes of including the Adelaide Park Lands on the South Australian Heritage Register, the *place* should be defined as per Part 3 of the *Adelaide Park Lands Act 2005*. Under that Act, the area designated as Adelaide Park Lands is defined by a plan deposited in the General Registry Office, Adelaide (GRO 127/2006)¹. See Fig 1. It includes the six squares, Palmer and Brougham Gardens. The area designated as Adelaide Park Lands may only be changed by resolution of both Houses of Parliament.

Background

"Our heritage consists of the places with special cultural value that we have inherited from the past, and that we intend to conserve and pass on to future generations. The *Heritage Places Act 1993* creates a South Australian Heritage Register. A place is eligible for entry in the Register if it is of heritage value, that is, if it meets one or more of the criteria in Section 16 of the Act."

The Adelaide Park Lands demonstrate important aspects of the evolution and pattern of the State's history

APPA submits that the Adelaide Park Lands, forming a complete figure eight of open space, is characteristic of Light's plan for the city (See Fig 2) and a key aspect of the state's initial settlement. It establishes the free, open and accessible parkland which is a fundamental characteristic of the State's ethos.

According to many sources, the River Torrens was named by William Light in documents and on maps, right from the initiation of the city (See Fig 2 and sources, below).

One reason Light decided on the location and configuration of Adelaide was in response to the instructions of the South Australian Colonization Commission, the third of which was "An abundant supply of fresh water." Light wrote as to why he selected the location:

¹ General Registry Office and Old System, Building 4A, 300 Richmond Road, Netley, SA, 5037.
https://www.sailis.sa.gov.au/products/imageDelivery/preview/plan/G127_-2006 (accessed July 2017).

“Because it was on a beautiful and gently rising ground and formed altogether a better connection with the river than any other place.”²

The river was named after Robert Torrens, Chairman of the South Australian Colonization Commission, London. Robert Richard Torrens, third Premier of South Australia and son of Robert, was the instigator of the Torrens system of registration of Titles of land in South Australia. He directly influenced its adoption throughout Australia and in many overseas jurisdictions. (He was prompted by the loss of most of the common law titles in the rapidly growing colony). The River Torrens is assigned several land titles on the defining map *Adelaide Park Lands GRO 127 /2006* (Fig 2). It is allocated to the “Care, Control and Management of the City of Adelaide.”

On this basis, APPA submits that the River Torrens and associated open space is a very significant component of the Adelaide Park Lands and a key aspect of the state’s initial establishment. It establishes the open and accessible parkland forming a completer figure eight, characteristic of Light’s plan for the city. At the same time, its naming is a link to the Torrens land title registration system, another aspect of the innovative pattern of the State's history.

The Adelaide Park Lands have an uncommon quality that is of cultural significance

The allocation of a wide expanse of parkland by Light, forming a figure eight of open space within which the privately titled allotments are positioned, is in itself unprecedented, and of outstanding cultural importance. The configuration of that open space was in part a response to the topography of the area: the streets and lots are positioned on suitably gently graded areas whereas the more steeply graded terrain became Park Lands. It is also an iconic symbol of the idea of systematic settlement as a free and open enterprise.

This provision was unprecedented: a city entirely surrounded by parklands. It became widely cited and used as a precedent by many town planners during the 19th and 20th century when advocating for the provision of green space park lands: Buckingham, Pemberton, Howard, Parker and Unwin.³

APPA submits that, on this basis, the Adelaide Park Lands have a unique quality that warrants their inclusion on the South Australian Heritage Register.

The Adelaide Park Lands may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history, including its natural history

The Kurna people, by tradition and association, have emphasised that the whole of the River Torrens and large parts of the Adelaide Park Lands are sites of cultural significance. Evidence of past occupation and use by Aboriginal people has been found in the Adelaide Park Lands. The areas within two hundred metres of the river and creeks are particularly rich in sites, objects and burial remains and may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's pre-history.

Further evidence of past Aboriginal occupation and use of Park Lands is provided by early paintings, for example, Alexander Schramm, *Adelaide, a tribe of natives on the banks of the river Torrens* 1850, National Gallery of Australia. See Fig 3.

² Quoted in Dutton, *Adelaide 1836-1997*, p33.

³ Johnson, *Anticipating Municipal Parks*, Ch 10.

One form of recognition of the prime importance of Aboriginal occupation and use of the Adelaide Park Lands is the naming of each park and acknowledgement of the prior occupation of this land by the Kaurna people: <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/kwp/placenames/council/>

Additionally, the Adelaide General Cemetery, which is located on Park Lands, is already included on the State Heritage register. It is one of Australia's oldest capital city cemeteries and a source of information that contributes to an understanding of the State's history. To that end, guided tours are conducted on a regular basis, such as Walking with ANZACS, History & Symbolism, In the Line of Duty, Science and Physicians, and Till Death Do Us Part.

The Adelaide Park Lands are an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance

The Adelaide Park Lands are used and cherished by a very wide cross-section of the community and for a very diverse range of uses. Organised sport, family picnics, schools' EC, horse agistment, formal and informal children's play grounds, boating and weddings. All of these activities have been accommodated in the Park Lands over a long period, particularly since the 1860s. (Summerling, p 65). In many respects, informal recreation and picnicking, with free access to the Park Lands, particularly in Botanic and Rymill Parks, are quintessentially part and parcel of Adelaide's much lauded lifestyle.

The provision of adequate freely accessible public open space was arguably one of the key differences sought through systematic settlement and was one of the items included by the Commissioners *Letter of Instructions* to Light. (Johnson, p 34). It may be recalled, in Britain, the provision of freely accessible public open space was unknown until London's royal parks were opened to the public the 1840s.

It is APPA's submission that the Adelaide Park Lands are an outstanding early exemplar of the provision of *adequate freely accessible public open space*, which is of prime cultural significance.

APPA submits that, on this basis, the Adelaide Park Lands warrants inclusion on the South Australian Heritage Register.

The Adelaide Park Lands demonstrate a high degree of creative, aesthetic and design characteristics

The Adelaide Park Lands have been recognised as an outstanding innovation in townscape, the original 'garden city'.

The plan for the parklands is not capricious: it was carefully constructed to reflect a long term vision for a orderly, permanent and yeoman settlement. In the context of the physically restrictive nature of British cities, Adelaide is bountifully open, representing a new era and opportunities unimaginable in the old country. When Light laid out his plan for the city, he had drawn a great park spreading to the north and south of the River Torrens and completely circumnavigating the built up areas, thereby forming a complete figure eight of open and accessible parkland. See Fig 2. Crucially, the generous public streets of both the city proper and North Adelaide front onto the Park Lands; the parkland is not cordoned off at the rear of private property. These were unprecedented revolutionary ideas: keeping the river, its banks and adjoining areas as Park Lands, available for use by the general public and fully accessible to the public. It's an enormous benefit to the citizens of Adelaide, not generally available in the UK, where most rivers were and remain privately owned and where the public can't freely row a boat down many streams let alone recreate along the banks.

This form of town layout set the pattern for many rural towns in South Australia, adapted to local topography. Towns such as Jamestown and Moonta.

In this respect, the Adelaide Park Lands demonstrate a high degree of creative accomplishment; the complete figure eight of Park Land is an outstanding representative of that design characteristic.

The Adelaide Park Lands have strong cultural or spiritual associations for the community or a group within it

Reference has been made elsewhere in this submission of the association of the Park Lands with Kurna occupation and cultural significance.

The Adelaide Park Lands it has a special association with the life and work of Col. William Light

While many eminent (and not so reputable) people have a marker of various types erected in the Park Lands and Squares of Adelaide, arguably the name of Colonel William Light is most strongly associated with the establishment of the Park Lands.

Light was an undeployed military captain when appointed surveyor-general of South Australia in 1836, and referred to as *a widely travelled soldier, seaman, musician, artist, and good in all* (Whitelock, p 6).

He was able in a very short time to oversee the setting out of the colony's capital in such an inventive and carefully constructed manner to meet the long term vision of a permanent free settlement. Adelaide is bountifully open, representing a new era and opportunities unimaginable in the old country. In that respect, Colonel Light's memorial is the whole of the Park Lands.

Colonel Light now has his grave and memorial in the centre of Light Square. This is a State Heritage Place in recognition of the importance of his contribution to the City of Adelaide, which is now a National Heritage Place "The Adelaide Park Lands and City Layout".⁴ Additionally, there is a full size statue of Light, now positioned at Montefiore Hill, North Adelaide.

Beyond the importance of his grave, memorial, and statue, Light's stature in relation to the provision of adequate and freely accessible public open space is a clear and important association.

SA Heritage Council member perceived conflict of interest

APPA submits that MR JASON SCHULZ, a member of SA Heritage Council and a director of DASHarchitects, which consultancy is preparing the assessment of the nomination, has a direct conflict of interest and should be excluded from the Council's deliberations and decision regarding the inclusion of the Adelaide Park Lands and Squares on the state heritage register.

⁴ http://www.cityofadelaide.com.au/assets/documents/apl_3.1.31_sq_light_square_report.pdf (accessed 15/08/2017).

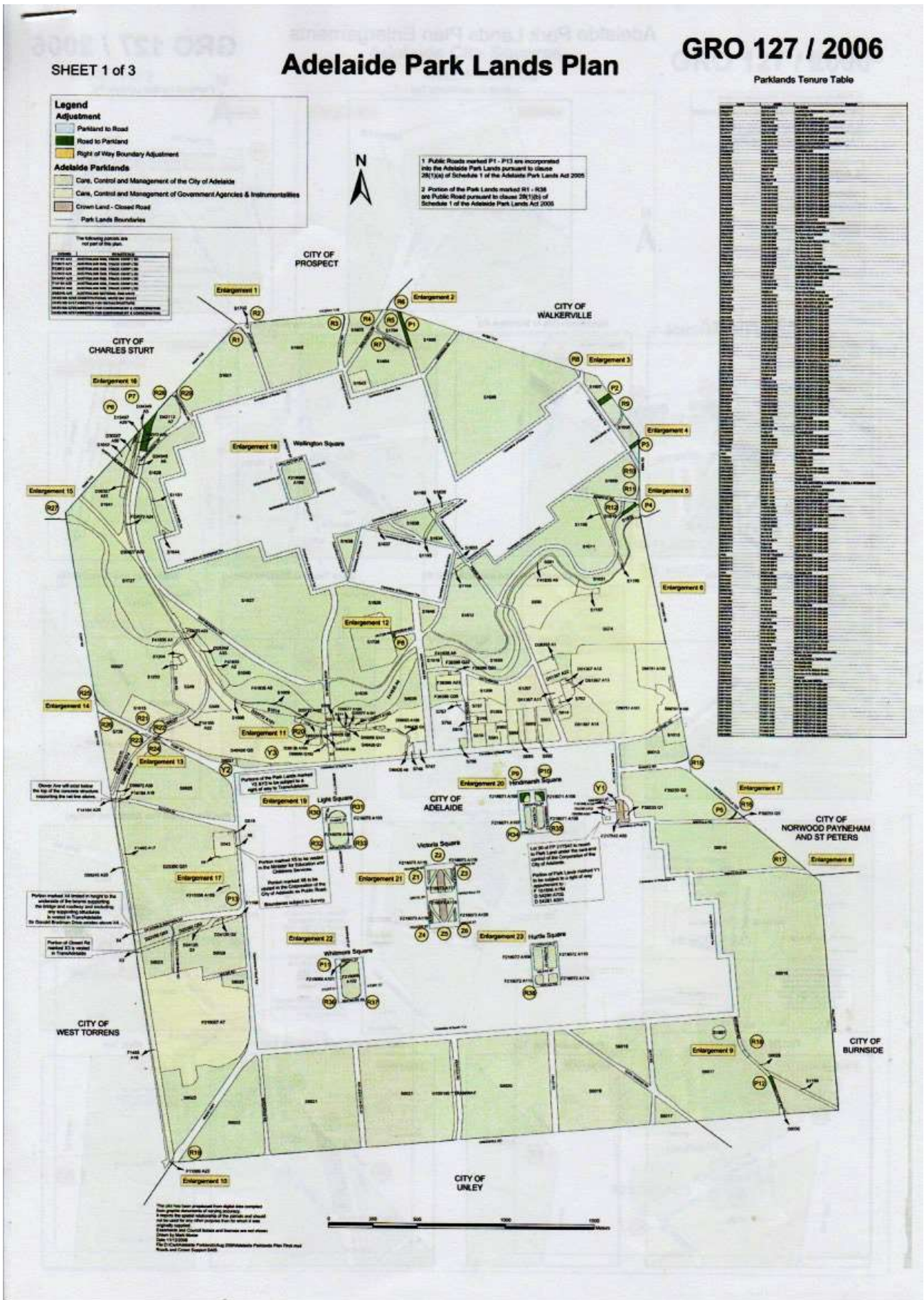


Figure 1: Adelaide Park Lands: GRO 127 /2006

Figure 2: *Adelaide Park Lands forming a figure eight of freely accessible open space.*





Figure 3: Alexander Schramm: *Adelaide, a tribe of natives on the banks of the river Torrens, 1850*, National Gallery of Australia.

Sources

Johnson, Donald Leslie, *Anticipating Municipal Parks*, Wakefield Press, Kent Town, 2013.

Jones, David, *Adelaide Park Lands and squares Cultural Landscape Assessment Study*, Corporation of the City of Adelaide, 2007. From <http://www.adelaideparklands.com.au/plans-policies/cultural-landscape-study/> (Accessed July 2017).

Light, William. *Brief Journal (shortened title)*. Adelaide: Archibald Mac Dougall, 1839. State Library of South Australia facsimile, 1963.

Sumerling, Patricia, *The Adelaide Park Lands: a social history*. Wakefield Press, Kent Town, 2011.

Whitelock, Dereck, *Adelaide 1836-1976*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1977.